

Heber Creeper Isn't Dead Yet

by Sonni Schwinn

7-17-91

Contrary to some reports, Wasatch County and Heber City officials haven't given up on trying to find a way to get the historic Heber Creeper railroad up and running again.

The Utah Department of Transportation, which owns most of the train's right of way and has \$400,000 earmarked to improve the railroad, is not making any public statements about its intent in the matter. However, indications are that the agency is leaving it up to the city and county to either buy the terminal grounds and take over the operation or find a private company to do it. Then the department will negotiate a lease agreement and decide what to do with the money.

Wasatch County Commissioner Pete Coleman accused UDOT officials of not being sincere when they claim they want the railroad operation restored.

"I think they want to close [the railroad] so they can do something with rails-to-trails in Provo Canyon," he said.

A State Parks and Recreation employee, apparently associated with some Park City residents who are promoting a trail system up the canyon to Park City and on to Echo, proposed to the county

commission about a year ago that they "sacrifice" the Creeper right of way for the system. The group already already has taken over an abandoned railroad right of way between Park City and Echo for the trail project.

Coleman reported he has scheduled a meeting later this week with a group that is interested in the railroad, but he doesn't know anything yet about what they may propose.

He said the Sons of the Utah Pioneers (SUP), which owns a large portion of the Creeper's rolling stock, would be willing to let the county continue to use the equipment if it will litigate a dispute between the organization and Lowe Ashton, the present owner of the railroad. He has a lease on the equipment that is still in effect, but he and the SUP disagree about its status. However, Coleman said he is not willing to put the county into the position of settling their dispute in court.

He said Ashton has notified the SUP that he intends to evict its equipment from the railroad yard and the county will let the SUP store the cars down the track. Ashton wasn't available by press time to verify or comment on Coleman's statement.

beauty of the mountains of Deer Valley, but also will have the opportunity to taste the gourmet cuisine of chef Alex Dusser in the form of Festival Dinners at the Goldener Hirsch Restaurant in Silver Lake Village, adjacent to the Silver Lake Lodge.

What else could one ask for?! We urge you to join us in celebrating this year's summer Festival, which will open with the Festival's 100th Concert! Tickets sell quickly. The Festival runs from July 18 through Sept. 1, and consists of a series of fifteen chamber music concerts (Thursday, July 18 and 25; Tuesday, July 23; Sundays, July 21 and 28, and Thursdays, Aug. 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29; Sundays, Aug. 4, 11, 18, and 21, and Sunday, Sept. 1, a series of recitals (Aug. 9, 13, 17,

Exhibit in The Food Department at County Fair

It isn't too early to start planning what you can exhibit in the Food Department at the fair this year. Watch for new rules in your 1991 fairbook. There are a few changes. For more information, call 654-1290.

Class of 1956 Schedules Reunion

The Wasatch High School Class of 1956 will hold a reunion Aug. 9 at Dock of the Bay. Class members, who have not been notified, should contact Clarence or Lois Mahoney at 654-1556; Barbara Ritchie, 654-2863 or Peg Giles at 654-0874.

WS

Monthly Dinner

Our monthly dinner is tomorrow at 12 noon. You are to bring your own dishes. The program will be Tom McCourt's daughter, Pat Mathis, who sang with the Tabernacle Choir for 20 years and her three daughters.

Wendover

We still have seats on the Wendover Trip for the 25th and 26th of July. The price is \$32 each and the buses will leave the Center at 10 a.m. on the 25th.

Bingo

We will have Bingo on Thursday, July 25 at 1 p.m. We will not

will need to bring proof of income. To qualify for assistance with your property tax, you need to be able to answer yes to these three questions: 1. Will you be age 65 before Dec. 31, 1991? Or under age 65, but disabled? Or under extreme hardship? If you are disabled and applying for the first time, attach a medical statement signed by your doctor. If you are under extreme hardship, attach an explanation of hardship. 1. Was your household income (from section 2) less than \$16,450? 3. Did you reside at your address for ten of the previous twelve months?

Trina

Disappointment That Heber Creeper Isn't Running is Spreading Worldwide

by Sonni Schwinn

7-17-91

The Heber Valley Chamber of Commerce has received hundreds of letters and calls from people inquiring about the Heber Creeper and expressing disappointment that it is no longer operating.

Gay McPhie, executive secretary of the Chamber, said letters have arrived from foreign countries, especially England, Japan, Alaska, and Canada, as well as from all over the United States. She said she answered at least phone 18 calls about the train on Monday.

She cited many cases in which tourists have driven out of their way to ride the Heber Creeper and "their faces fell" when they found out it was no longer operating. She said when a couple from Texas went into the Chamber's Visitors Center and found out they couldn't take their two children for a train ride, the children cried.

"I don't think people realize what the train means, not just to this county but to the State of

Utah...how famous the Heber Creeper is because of the steam engine," she said. She said many people who travel to Utah for events or activities on the Wasatch Front or in Park City tell her they already have seen the usual tourist sites in those areas and are excited when they learn they can ride a steam train down Provo Canyon. Some tourists specifically come to the region because of the Heber Creeper.

Even with the operation shut down, several cars are always in the station's parking lot and people are walking through the railroad yard just looking at the steam engines and cars. One day two weeks ago, two tour buses full of people wandered along the tracks admiring the historic rolling stock and taking pictures, disappointed that they couldn't enjoy a ride.

"[The Creeper] is our heritage. This was a depot for the cattle and

sheep," said McPhie.

She said a man in Maine wrote that a train in his community had been replaced by stores. She quote him as saying, "That was our heritage and 30 years down the road we'll ask 'What have we done?'"

She said many people come for a ride on the train because they have enjoyed it before. When they find out the operation has been shut down, they are saddened and tell her "story after story" about their previous experiences. She said hundreds of people have called from the Wasatch Front for the train schedule because they are expecting relatives from out-of-state and a ride on the train "is a must on their itinerary."

She said one Nebraska couple who were "train buffs" and were vacationing in Denver drove all the way to Heber City just to ride the Heber Creeper. She said everybody has been disappointed that it isn't running, but that couple was angry about it.

McPhie said she has still receives calls from companies that want to use the railroad in films.

When visitors find out they can't ride the train, they ask what else they can do in the valley as long as they're here. McPhie suggests fishing, windsurfing, or golfing, but most tourists aren't interested. Therefore, she said there's no choice but to direct them to Sundance, Bridal Veil Falls, and Timpanogos Cave in Provo Canyon, then down to Utah County.

McPhie said she told one couple they could wait outside the Midway Town Hall for the Glockenspiel on the clock to signal the hour. "They looked at me like I was nuts," she said.

She said without the Heber Creeper, visitors aren't interested in the Heber Valley. But she said when the train was running, people who came in for a ride stopped to eat in the valley and even shopped in stores on Main Street.

Family History Center, 700 S. 200 E., Heber City. Library hours, Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Evenings (Mon., Thurs., Fri.) 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday, 9 a.m. to 12 noon. Make appointments for computer use. Trained personnel.

Recycling Bins, located at Garbage Disposal Station, 1900 S. U.S. Hwy. 40. Please support this effort by disposing of all recyclable items (aluminum cans, newspapers, cardboard, washed plastic bottles, clear glass, and colored glass).

Garbage Dump, located at 1900 S. U.S. Hwy. 40, will be open April 10 through May 18, Tuesday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Dump yard waste and debris free-of-charge.

The Solid Waste Department is now located at the Public Works Department. The phone number is 654-1661.

Wasatch Waste Disposal Station's new hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

Alanon Meetings (Wednesday) Wasatch County Complex, 805 West 100 South, Heber City, 8 p.m. For information, call Connie, 654-0707, daytime; after five, Gail, 654-3872.

Alateen Meetings (Fridays) 3 p.m., at 3677 S. 2800 W., near Charleston Cemetery. Questions? Call Ann, 654-3061 or Jan, 654-2902.

AA Meetings: Heber City, Monday and Thursday, 8 p.m. at Wasatch County Complex, 805 West 100 South. AA meeting every Saturday night, 9 p.m. same place.

THE WASATCH WAVE

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